

**1 Kings 12: A Kingdom Divided**  
*“A Bible Study for Life in Quarantine”*  
By: Pastor Matt Brown

Instructions - What a better opportunity to dive into God’s Word than when you are stuck at home? You can work through this study as an individual or as a family. You could use it for 6 straight days in a week, or spread it out over 2 weeks. I pray that the truths found in 1 Kings 12 would both challenge and comfort you during this time.

Background Information - In 1 Kings 1-10, the Kingdom of Israel was united under Solomon. Things were going pretty well. Solomon’s fame, wealth, and wisdom were known by all and this helped the whole nation thrive. But sadly, things turned sour quickly. In 1 Kings 11, we find a different Solomon, one whose heart turned away from the Lord. He accumulated many foreign wives, who led him into idolatry. Because of this, God promised to tear the Kingdom away from him, and do it when his son takes power. At the end of chapter 11, Solomon dies, and his son, Rehoboam, takes power. The Kingdom is on a downward trend, ripe for something big to go down. What will happen next?

### **Day One**

Read - 1 Kings 11:26-43 (for context)

#### Understand

1. Who was Jeroboam?
2. What did God promise to Jeroboam?
3. Why was God going to tear the Kingdom away from Solomon’s line?
4. Why does God promise to allow Solomon’s line to keep one tribe, and for Solomon to continue out his days as king?
5. What requirements does God give Jeroboam, if he is going to thrive as king?

#### Apply

1. What led to Solomon’s sin? What can you learn from such a drastic, downward turn in his life?
2. What does this passage teach us about turning away from the Lord versus following and listening to Him?
3. God still let Solomon's line keep one tribe. What does that show about God?

Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Matt - Oh, how quickly things can change! For most of his life, Solomon was the prime example of someone following God's wisdom. But at the end of his life, he turned away from the Lord, as he let idolatry infiltrate his life.

This reminds us that we need to *always* be on guard against sin. Never think that you have "arrived" in the Christian life. Don't let this current pandemic be a time for sin to creep its way in, but look to Christ and follow His ways. He will provide the way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13)! Although we often fail, He is always faithful and keeps his promises. So cling to Christ, the faithful One.

Pray

## **Day Two**

Read: 1 Kings 12:1-5

Understand

1. Solomon created lots of taxation and forced labor in order to facilitate his building projects, military, and personal treasury. While the people didn't mind some of his policies back in the day, the policies became increasingly hard on the people.
2. Over time, Solomon's policies seem to have heavily favored the southern tribes, which created a sort of silent rift in the nation.
3. What stipulation did the people demand of Rehoboam?
4. In verse 5, what good thing did Rehoboam do?

Apply

1. Do you ever make stipulations to God before you will do something for him? Why is that not a good thing to do?
2. How do you handle times of transition?
3. When faced with a decision, do you allow yourself time to think and pray it over?

Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Matt: Solomon has passed away, Rehoboam is now in charge. But with such a drastic change in leadership, how will the people respond and how will Rehoboam lead? There's a glimmer of hope in Rehoboam's desire to take time to make a decision, but will he make the right choice?

In life, you will encounter many times of transition. This pandemic may even be characterized as a time of transition for you. How do you respond to those times? Do you make rash decisions? A time

of transition often reveals our character, whether good or bad. Yet times of transition are never times to turn from God. Thankfully, Christ's character remains the same, whether a time of transition or not!

### Pray

### **Day Three**

Read: 1 Kings 12:6-15

### Understand

1. Who does Rehoboam seek counsel from?
2. Who *should* have Rehoboam sought counsel from?
3. What is Rehoboam's decision? And what does that show us about Rehoboam?
4. Why does Rehoboam choose the wrong advice? (2 reasons) [hint: think of Rehoboam's sin, yet also consider verse 15]
5. Consider Rehoboam's response to the people in verses 13-14. Is that the way the king of Israel should treat the people? Should the people of Israel be essentially slaves to the king? (Rehoboam is acting like Pharaoh did in Egypt back in Exodus!)

### Apply

1. Do you humbly serve others or is life all about what you want?
2. Who do you seek in order to make a wise choice?
3. Do you remember that God is sovereign even amidst situations that don't look so good?

Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Matt: Rehoboam's heart and values shone forth in this passage, and it's not pretty. He was faced with a decision that would impact the nation, and he chose foolishly. Instead of seeking the Lord and being a servant-leader, he chose to follow his pride and strive to become a domineering, intimidating tyrant.

We are faced with decisions every single day. Some are bigger than others, but each decision needs wisdom. This text pushes us to remember that we need to seek the wisdom from above, and not our own. Our own wisdom tells us to choose whatever is best for us, and all too often that is the path to disaster. When you heed God's wisdom, you are restrained from making foolish choices.

This passage also reminds us that God's Word always proves true, even amidst unwise choices. He's in control of circumstances, even when they look bad. There is human responsibility, yet also

divine sovereignty. Even though we don't quite understand how they work together, they are both still true. Rest in God's control, even when it looks darkest.

### Pray

## **Day Four**

Read: 1 Kings 12:16-20

### Understand

1. What were the people basically saying in verse 16?
2. Why did Rehoboam send Adoram (taskmaster over the forced labor) to the people?
3. The nation of Israel was now divided between Israel (10 tribes) in the North, and Judah (2 tribes) in the South.

### Apply

1. When you make decisions or face hard times as a family or as a church, is God pushed out of the picture?
2. Notice the escalation: disagreement, murder, division of a nation. What does that show us about what happens when we follow our own path?
3. Are you unified with others, especially when it comes to the church?

Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Matt: The official division of the Kingdom of Israel has happened. Things escalated very quickly! And now you have Israel in the north, ruled by Jeroboam, and Judah in the south, ruled by Rehoboam.

This scene reminds us that division is what happens when God is pushed out of the picture. Bad decisions often lead to more bad decisions when we follow our own wisdom. Here's the nation of Israel (God's people!), who should have been the most holy and unified group on earth, yet they are divided amongst themselves.

This is a clear reminder that the unity of God's people depends on our focus. Do you see a church in disunity? They are probably focusing on themselves and not God. So in order to cultivate continued unity, we need to all be looking to our Savior, seeking what he thinks and what he wants. When we make decisions, face transitions, and encounter hard times - let's not push God out of the picture, but go to him in prayer and seek his wisdom *together*. That's when we will be unified.

### Pray

## Day Five

Read: 1 Kings 12:21-24

### Understand

1. What is Rehoboam's response to this rebellion when he gets back to Jerusalem?
2. What does God tell Rehoboam to do?
3. Why does God tell him not to go?
4. What is Rehoboam's response to God?
5. Do you notice any change in Rehoboam?

### Apply

1. When someone hurts you, is your normal reaction to escalate things and get them back?
2. Do you trust God even when it doesn't seem to make sense in the current situation that you're in?
3. Do you listen and heed God's Word?

Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Matt: Rehoboam was intent on getting the nation back together, even if it meant a civil war. Yet something stopped him dead in his tracks - God spoke. Surprisingly, against all other odds, Rehoboam listens and the war never begins.

What a change in Rehoboam! Earlier in the chapter, he wanted to show the people who was boss, but now he restrains himself after hearing from God. Rehoboam's foolish mistake was not the end of him, as he obeyed God in this instance. What an encouraging truth for us! Your sinful choices in the past don't have to continue, for you still have a chance to obey God *now*. But will you? God used his prophets to speak for him at this time, but for us he speaks through the Scriptures. Do you listen to them, though?

### Pray

## Day Six

Read: 1 Kings 12:25-33

### Understand

1. What led Jeroboam to create two calves of gold?
2. What story does verse 28 remind you of?
3. What's wrong with Jeroboam's "version" of worship?

### Apply

1. Jeroboam's desire to keep his power led him (and the nation) into idolatry. What sinful things could happen in your life if you seek to preserve your own power, reputation, or position?
2. Do you trust God's promises or your own strength and wisdom when faced with a difficult situation?
3. What idols in your heart have you set up?

Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Matt: Back in 1 Kings 11:38, God promised Jeroboam a kingdom as enduring as David's, if he kept God's commandments. All Jeroboam had to do was to listen and follow the Lord, but God's promise to him wasn't enough. He needed a self-created solution that would make him feel more in control. This led Israel into idolatry so bad that every single part of its worship was false.

Don't we do the same thing? All we need to do is listen and follow the Lord and trust His promises, but what do we do? We consider them "not good enough". We feel the need to develop our own means to protect and control the situation, and we end up trusting ourselves. We may not be creating a whole new religion filled with idols, but we have surely set up idols in our hearts. Tear down those idols, repent, and turn back to your loving, gracious God.

### Pray

Concluding Thoughts - 1 Kings 12 shows us a divided kingdom with some very flawed kings reigning over each part.

Jesus tells us that he has a Kingdom, which is not of this world. This Kingdom will never fail or be divided, but as Hebrews 12:28 says, "Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken..." Praise be to God that we are a part of a Kingdom that will not crumble, but is ruled by King Jesus.

I'm thankful that our King is not a domineering tyrant, who makes unwise decisions. Instead, he showed that he always makes the wisest of choices, and that he's a servant-leader, who went so far as to die on the Cross for our sins. I'm thankful that our King, Jesus, is not a King who will lead us into sin, but who leads us *out* of it. Aren't you thankful for a King like that?